NFIP

New Hampshire's Floodplain Management Program

Fact Sheet #8

New Hampshire Floodplain Mapping

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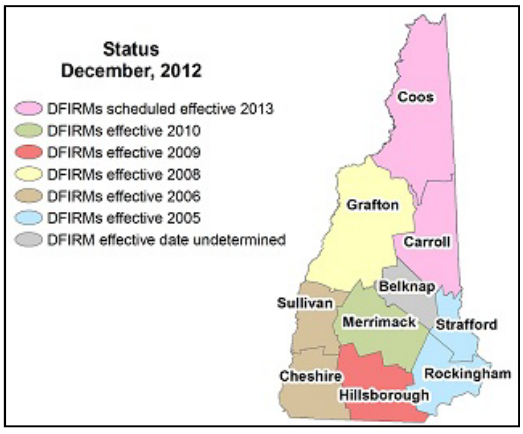
Following the creation of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) in 1968, the agency known today as the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) began identifying flood hazard areas throughout the U.S. and its territories by producing Flood Hazard Boundary Maps (FHBMs), Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs), and Flood Boundary and Floodway Maps (FBFMs). These maps are used for floodplain management purposes, to determine appropriate risk-based premium rates for the NFIP, and to inform disaster response plans for Federal, State, and local emergency management personnel.

Several areas of flood hazards are commonly identified on these maps. One of these areas is the Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA), a high-risk area defined as any land that would be inundated by a flood having a 1-percent chance of occurring in any given year (also referred to as the base flood).

FEMA has initiated two recent programs to update the nation's aging floodplain maps. These two programs are highlighted below.

Flood Map Modernization Program (FMMP)

In fiscal year 2003, FEMA initiated a Flood Map Modernization Program (FMMP). The goal of the national FMMP is to upgrade flood hazard data and mapping to create a more accurate digital product called a Digital Flood Insurance Rate Map (DFIRM) that will improve floodplain management across the country. The final year of congressionally appropriated funding of the FMMP occurred in 2008 with map production continuing through 2011. Upon completion, Map Modernization will provide reliable digital flood hazard data and maps for 92 percent of the Nation's population and easy access and sharing of that information.



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RiskMAP

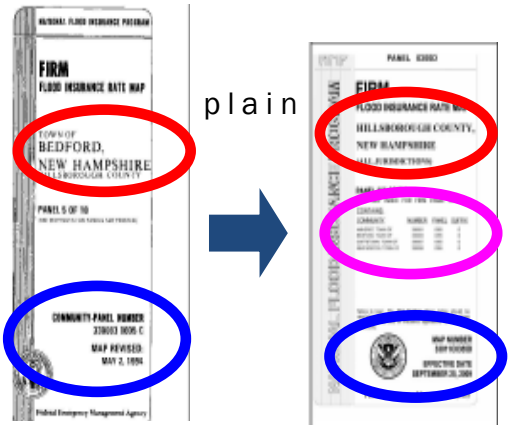
With the strong foundation of FMMP now in place, FEMA continues to deliver the flood hazard identification process through the Risk MAP (Mapping, Assessment and Planning) Strategy. The goal of Risk MAP is to provide a bridge between continuing improvements to flood hazard data and mapping, and the identification and broad understanding of flood and other natural hazards at the local and state level. The Risk MAP effort will strengthen partnerships with local communities as the emphasis is now on seeking innovative ways to identify hazards and weaving this information into the local and regional decision-making processes.

The vision for Risk MAP in New Hampshire is to:

- Achieve complete, high-quality digital flood hazard coverage for the state, with improved flood hazard data for areas of highest population densities, growth potential, and flood histories;
- Foster an environment to build state and local capabilities on natural hazards identification, understanding, assessment, and planning;
- Create a continuously improving program for flood hazard data development and future map maintenance; and
- Promote professional floodplain management excellence within the state of New Hampshire.

Primary collaborators on both the FMMP and Risk MAP in New Hampshire are the NH Office of Energy and Planning (OEP) and NH GRANIT at the University of New Hampshire, which are both FEMA Cooperating Technical Partners (CTP). NH OEP is the state coordinating agency of the National Flood Insurance Program. NH GRANIT is New Hampshire's statewide GIS clearinghouse. It is on NH GRANIT's web site where the New Hampshire DFIRMs can be found (see page 4 of this handout).

What Changes Have Occurred to the New Maps?



In all areas of a county, whether a restudy of floodplain areas occurred or not, there will be at least three changes to the floodplain maps.

1. Community-wide Maps to County-wide Maps

As part of the FMMP, FEMA began producing county-wide flood plain maps in all states nationwide. In 2005, New Hampshire received the first county-wide maps. Prior to FMMP, floodplain maps were created for a single community. With the county-wide maps, communities will now see their neighboring communities and their floodplain areas. During the creation of the county-wide maps, some adjustments were made along community borders to address any mismatches of the floodplain areas between communities.

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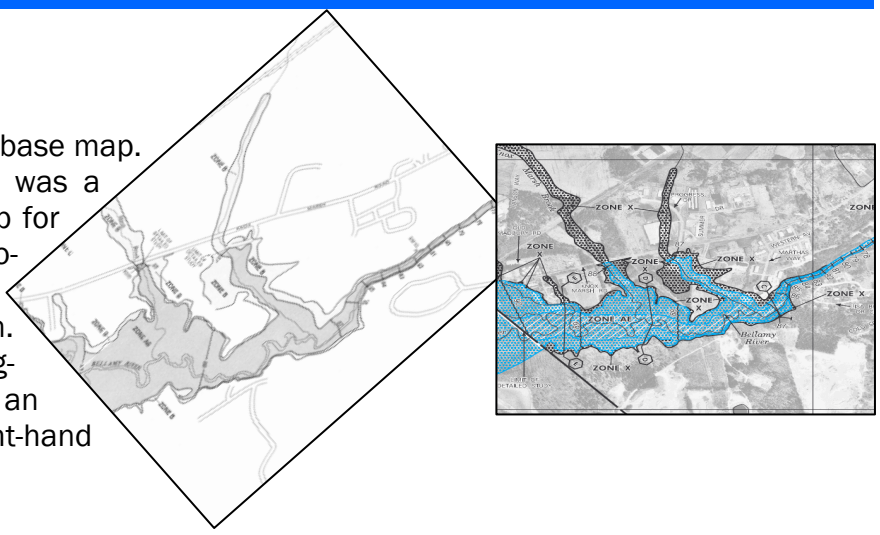
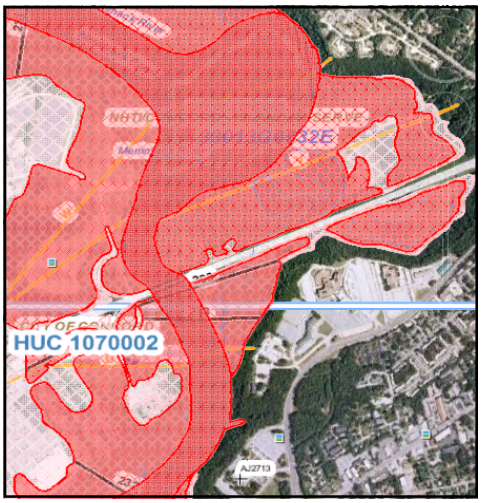
2. New Base Map

Another change to the maps is the new base map. The base map for the previous maps was a plain white background. The base map for the new maps is now an aerial photograph in which all the roads and structures on the photograph can be seen. An example of this can be seen in the figure to the right. On the left-hand side is an example of the old maps and on the right-hand side is an example of the new maps.



3. Available in Digital Format

The DFIRMs are designed to be used with Geographic Information Systems (GIS) software, which allows the user to access, view, and analyze mapping information using specialized data. Therefore, communities with GIS software can now overlay the floodplain data with the community's other data such as their tax map, which can help residents identify flood hazards on their property.



For the New Hampshire counties, who have the new maps in effect, the GIS data can be downloaded for free from NH GRANIT's web site at: http://www.granit.unh.edu/data/search (theme keyword: flood).

Flood hazard information is also available for viewing through Google Earth™ (see image on right). The "Stay Dry" and "FEMA NFHL" applications allows you to use Google Earth (TM) to view flood hazard information from FEMA's National Flood Hazard Layer (NFHL) for a community or an address. More information about these applications can be viewed at: https://hazards.fema.gov/femaportal/wps/portal/NFHLWMSkmzdownload

Floodplain Map Tutorials Available

FEMA has tutorials available on their web site for those who want to learn how to read a floodplain map and how to find and print a floodplain map. Links to these tutorials can be found at:

http://www.nh.gov/oep/programs/floodplainmanagement/maps.htm

Where to Find the FEMA Floodplain Maps and Studies for NH Communities

FEMA Map Service Center

The following information is available from the FEMA Map Service Center at the following web site: http://msc.fema.gov

- **Current, Historic, and Future FEMA Floodplain Maps**
  - Available for viewing, printing portions of the map (by creating a FIRMette), and purchasing digital copies of the maps. Paper copies are no longer available.
- **Current FEMA Flood Insurance Studies**
  - Available for viewing and purchasing digital copies of the studies. Paper copies are no longer available.
- **Letter of Map Changes (LOMC)**
  - Full size (8.5 x 11 in) pdf files of each LOMC available for viewing, download, and printing.

NH GRANIT - DFIRMS

The FEMA floodplain maps and studies are available from NH GRANIT for communities in the following counties at the following web site: http://www.granit.unh.edu/dfirms/

- **Carroll** (will be effective 3/19/13)
- **Cheshire** (effective 5/23/06)
- **Coos** (will be effective 2/20/13)
- **Grafton** (effective 2/20/08)
- **Hillsborough** (effective 9/25/09)
- **Merrimack** (effective 4/09/10)
- **Rockingham** (effective 5/17/05)
- **Strafford** (effective 5/17/05)
- **Sullivan** (effective 5/23/06)

- **Current & Preliminary FEMA Floodplain Maps and Flood Insurance Studies**
  - Full size (36 x 24 in) pdf files of each map panel available for viewing, download, and printing to large scale plotter.
  - Printing services for a small fee for those seeking paper copies of the above FEMA floodplain maps.
  - GIS data supporting the floodplain maps are available for download at: http://www.granit.unh.edu/data/search (theme keyword: flood)
  - Full size (8.5 x 11 in) pdf files of each study available for viewing, download, and printing.

NH GRANIT - GRANITView

The GRANITView web mapping application provides access to key NH GRANIT data layers, along with a suite of tools to navigate and interact with those data layers. It can be found at the following web site: http://granitview.unh.edu/

- View the above floodplain data by selecting Floodplains (DFIRMS) under the Map Layers for the counties listed above.
- View floodplain data in relation to other layers (e.g. soils, wetlands, topography, geodetic control points).
- Zoom in for a close up view of areas on a clear and recent aerial photograph.